

106TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1832

---

---

## AN ACT

To reform unfair and anticompetitive practices in  
the professional boxing industry.

106TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1832

---

## AN ACT

To reform unfair and anticompetitive practices in the  
professional boxing industry.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2   *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2       This Act may be cited as the “Muhammad Ali Boxing  
3 Reform Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5       The Congress makes the following findings:

6           (1) Professional boxing differs from other  
7 major, interstate professional sports industries in  
8 the United States in that it operates without any  
9 private sector association, league, or centralized in-  
10 dustry organization to establish uniform and appro-  
11 priate business practices and ethical standards. This  
12 has led to repeated occurrences of disreputable and  
13 coercive business practices in the boxing industry, to  
14 the detriment of professional boxers nationwide.

15           (2) State officials are the proper regulators of  
16 professional boxing events, and must protect the wel-  
17 fare of professional boxers and serve the public in-  
18 terest by closely supervising boxing activity in their  
19 jurisdiction. State boxing commissions do not cur-  
20 rently receive adequate information to determine  
21 whether boxers competing in their jurisdiction are  
22 being subjected to contract terms and business prac-  
23 tices which may violate State regulations, or are on-  
24 erous and confiscatory.

25           (3) Promoters who engage in illegal, coercive,  
26 or unethical business practices can take advantage

1 of the lack of equitable business standards in the  
2 sport by holding boxing events in States with weaker  
3 regulatory oversight.

4 (4) The sanctioning organizations which have  
5 proliferated in the boxing industry have not estab-  
6 lished credible and objective criteria to rate profes-  
7 sional boxers, and operate with virtually no industry  
8 or public oversight. Their ratings are susceptible to  
9 manipulation, have deprived boxers of fair opportu-  
10 nities for advancement, and have undermined public  
11 confidence in the integrity of the sport.

12 (5) Open competition in the professional boxing  
13 industry has been significantly interfered with by re-  
14 strictive and anticompetitive business practices of  
15 certain promoters and sanctioning bodies, to the det-  
16 riment of the athletes and the ticket-buying public.  
17 Common practices of promoters and sanctioning or-  
18 ganizations represent restraints of interstate trade  
19 in the United States.

20 (6) It is necessary and appropriate to establish  
21 national contracting reforms to protect professional  
22 boxers and prevent exploitive business practices, and  
23 to require enhanced financial disclosures to State  
24 athletic commissions to improve the public oversight  
25 of the sport.

1 **SEC. 3. PURPOSES.**

2 The purposes of this Act are—

3 (1) to protect the rights and welfare of profes-  
4 sional boxers on an interstate basis by preventing  
5 certain exploitive, oppressive, and unethical business  
6 practices;

7 (2) to assist State boxing commissions in their  
8 efforts to provide more effective public oversight of  
9 the sport; and

10 (3) to promote honorable competition in profes-  
11 sional boxing and enhance the overall integrity of  
12 the industry.

13 **SEC. 4. PROTECTING BOXERS FROM EXPLOITATION.**

14 The Professional Boxing Safety Act of 1996 (15  
15 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) is amended—

16 (1) by redesignating sections 9 through 15 as  
17 sections 17 through 23, respectively; and

18 (2) by inserting after section 8 the following  
19 new sections:

20 **“SEC. 9. CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS.**

21 “Within 2 years after the date of the enactment of  
22 the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act, the Association  
23 of Boxing Commissions shall develop and shall approve by  
24 a vote of no less than a majority of its member State box-  
25 ing commissioners, guidelines for minimum contractual

1 provisions that should be included in bout agreements and  
2 boxing contracts. It is the sense of the Congress that State  
3 boxing commissions should follow these ABC guidelines.

4 **“SEC. 10. PROTECTION FROM COERCIVE CONTRACTS.**

5 “(a) GENERAL RULE.—

6 “(1)(A) A contract provision shall be considered  
7 to be in restraint of trade, contrary to public policy,  
8 and unenforceable against any boxer to the extent  
9 that it—

10 “(i) is a coercive provision described in  
11 subparagraph (B) and is for a period greater  
12 than 12 months; or

13 “(ii) is a coercive provision described in  
14 subparagraph (B) and the other boxer under  
15 contract to the promoter came under that con-  
16 tract pursuant to a coercive provision described  
17 in subparagraph (B).

18 “(B) A coercive provision described in this sub-  
19 paragraph is a contract provision that grants any  
20 rights between a boxer and a promoter, or between  
21 promoters with respect to a boxer, if the boxer is re-  
22 quired to grant such rights, or a boxer’s promoter  
23 is required to grant such rights with respect to a  
24 boxer to another promoter, as a condition precedent  
25 to the boxer’s participation in a professional boxing

1 match against another boxer who is under contract  
2 to the promoter.

3 “(2) This subsection shall only apply to con-  
4 tracts entered into after the date of the enactment  
5 of the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act.

6 “(3) No subsequent contract provision extend-  
7 ing any rights or compensation covered in paragraph  
8 (1) shall be enforceable against a boxer if the effec-  
9 tive date of the contract containing such provision is  
10 earlier than 3 months before the expiration of the  
11 relevant time period set forth in paragraph (1).

12 “(b) PROMOTIONAL RIGHTS UNDER MANDATORY  
13 BOUT CONTRACTS.—No boxing service provider may re-  
14 quire a boxer to grant any future promotional rights as  
15 a requirement of competing in a professional boxing match  
16 that is a mandatory bout under the rules of a sanctioning  
17 organization.

18 **“SEC. 11. SANCTIONING ORGANIZATIONS.**

19 “(a) OBJECTIVE CRITERIA.—Within 2 years after the  
20 date of the enactment of the Muhammad Ali Boxing Re-  
21 form Act, the Association of Boxing Commissions shall de-  
22 velop and shall approve by a vote of no less than a major-  
23 ity of its member State boxing commissioners, guidelines  
24 for objective and consistent written criteria for the ratings  
25 of professional boxers. It is the sense of the Congress that

1 sanctioning bodies and State boxing commissions should  
2 follow these ABC guidelines.

3 “(b) APPEALS PROCESS.—A sanctioning organization  
4 shall not be entitled to receive any compensation, directly  
5 or indirectly, in connection with a boxing match, until it  
6 provides the boxers with notice that the sanctioning orga-  
7 nization shall, within 7 days after receiving a request from  
8 a boxer questioning that organization’s rating of the  
9 boxer—

10 “(1) provide to the boxer a written explanation  
11 of the organization’s criteria, its rating of the boxer,  
12 and the rationale or basis for its rating (including  
13 a response to any specific questions submitted by the  
14 boxer); and

15 “(2) submit a copy of its explanation to the As-  
16 sociation of Boxing Commissions.

17 “(c) NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE IN RATING.—A  
18 sanctioning organization shall not be entitled to receive  
19 any compensation, directly or indirectly, in connection  
20 with a boxing match, until, with respect to a change in  
21 the rating of a boxer previously rated by such organization  
22 in the top 10 boxers, the organization—

23 “(1) posts a copy, within 7 days of such  
24 change, on its Internet website or home page, if any,



1 including an explanation of such change, for a pe-  
2 riod of not less than 30 days; and

3 “(2) provides a copy of the rating change and  
4 explanation to an association to which at least a ma-  
5 jority of the State boxing commissions belong.

6 “(d) PUBLIC DISCLOSURE.—

7 “(1) FTC FILING.—A sanctioning organization  
8 shall not be entitled to receive any compensation di-  
9 rectly or indirectly in connection with a boxing  
10 match unless, not later than January 31 of each  
11 year, it submits to the Federal Trade Commission  
12 and to the ABC—

13 “(A) a complete description of the organi-  
14 zation’s ratings criteria, policies, and general  
15 sanctioning fee schedule;

16 “(B) the bylaws of the organization;

17 “(C) the appeals procedure of the organi-  
18 zation for a boxer’s rating; and

19 “(D) a list and business address of the or-  
20 ganization’s officials who vote on the ratings of  
21 boxers.

22 “(2) FORMAT; UPDATES.—A sanctioning orga-  
23 nization shall—

24 “(A) provide the information required  
25 under paragraph (1) in writing, and, for any

1 document greater than 2 pages in length, also  
2 in electronic form; and

3 “(B) promptly notify the Federal Trade  
4 Commission of any material change in the in-  
5 formation submitted.

6 “(3) FTC TO MAKE INFORMATION AVAILABLE  
7 TO PUBLIC.—The Federal Trade Commission shall  
8 make information received under this subsection  
9 available to the public. The Commission may assess  
10 sanctioning organizations a fee to offset the costs it  
11 incurs in processing the information and making it  
12 available to the public.

13 “(4) INTERNET ALTERNATIVE.—In lieu of sub-  
14 mitting the information required by paragraph (1)  
15 to the Federal Trade Commission, a sanctioning or-  
16 ganization may provide the information to the public  
17 by maintaining a website on the Internet that—

18 “(A) is readily accessible by the general  
19 public using generally available search engines  
20 and does not require a password or payment of  
21 a fee for full access to all the information;

22 “(B) contains all the information required  
23 to be submitted to the Federal Trade Commis-  
24 sion by paragraph (1) in an easy to search and  
25 use format; and

1                   “(C) is updated whenever there is a mate-  
2                   rial change in the information.

3   **“SEC. 12. REQUIRED DISCLOSURES TO STATE BOXING COM-**  
4                   **MISSIONS BY SANCTIONING ORGANIZATIONS.**

5           “A sanctioning organization shall not be entitled to  
6 receive any compensation directly or indirectly in connec-  
7 tion with a boxing match until it provides to the boxing  
8 commission responsible for regulating the match in a  
9 State a statement of—

10           “(1) all charges, fees, and costs the organiza-  
11 tion will assess any boxer participating in that  
12 match;

13           “(2) all payments, benefits, complimentary ben-  
14 efits, and fees the organization will receive for its af-  
15 filiation with the event, from the promoter, host of  
16 the event, and all other sources; and

17           “(3) such additional information as the commis-  
18 sion may require.

19   **“SEC. 13. REQUIRED DISCLOSURES FOR PROMOTERS.**

20           “(a) DISCLOSURES TO THE BOXING COMMISSIONS.—  
21 A promoter shall not be entitled to receive any compensa-  
22 tion directly or indirectly in connection with a boxing  
23 match until it provides to the boxing commission respon-  
24 sible for regulating the match in a State a statement of—

1           “(1) a copy of any agreement in writing to  
2           which the promoter is a party with any boxer par-  
3           ticipating in the match;

4           “(2) a statement made under penalty of perjury  
5           that there are no other agreements, written or oral,  
6           between the promoter and the boxer with respect to  
7           that match; and

8           “(3)(A) all fees, charges, and expenses that will  
9           be assessed by or through the promoter on the boxer  
10          pertaining to the event, including any portion of the  
11          boxer’s purse that the promoter will receive, and  
12          training expenses;

13          “(B) all payments, gifts, or benefits the pro-  
14          moter is providing to any sanctioning organization  
15          affiliated with the event; and

16          “(C) any reduction in a boxer’s purse contrary  
17          to a previous agreement between the promoter and  
18          the boxer or a purse bid held for the event.

19          “(b) DISCLOSURES TO THE BOXER.—A promoter  
20          shall not be entitled to receive any compensation directly  
21          or indirectly in connection with a boxing match until it  
22          provides to the boxer it promotes—

23                 “(1) the amounts of any compensation or con-  
24                 sideration that a promoter has contracted to receive  
25                 from such match;

9           “(c) INFORMATION TO BE AVAILABLE TO STATE AT-  
10 TORNEY GENERAL.—A promoter shall make information  
11 required to be disclosed under this section available to the  
12 chief law enforcement officer of the State in which the  
13 match is to be held upon request of such officer.

16       “A judge or referee shall not be entitled to receive  
17 any compensation, directly or indirectly, in connection  
18 with a boxing match until it provides to the boxing com-  
19 mission responsible for regulating the match in a State  
20 a statement of all consideration, including reimbursement  
21 for expenses, that will be received from any source for par-  
22 ticipation in the match.

24       “(a) IN GENERAL.—Neither a boxing commission or  
25   an Attorney General may disclose to the public any matter

1 furnished by a promoter under section 13 except to the  
 2 extent required in a legal, administrative, or judicial pro-  
 3 ceeding.

4 “(b) EFFECT OF CONTRARY STATE LAW.—If a State  
 5 law governing a boxing commission requires that informa-  
 6 tion that would be furnished by a promoter under section  
 7 13 shall be made public, then a promoter is not required  
 8 to file such information with such State if the promoter  
 9 files such information with the ABC.

10 **“SEC. 16. JUDGES AND REFEREES.**

11 “No person may arrange, promote, organize, produce,  
 12 or fight in a professional boxing match unless all referees  
 13 and judges participating in the match have been certified  
 14 and approved by the boxing commission responsible for  
 15 regulating the match in the State where the match is  
 16 held.”.

17 **SEC. 5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST.**

18 Section 17 of the Professional Boxing Safety Act of  
 19 1996 (15 U.S.C. 6308) (as redesignated by section 4 of  
 20 this Act) is amended—

21 (1) in the first sentence by striking “No mem-  
 22 ber” and inserting “(a) REGULATORY PER-  
 23 SONNEL.—No member”; and

24 (2) by adding at the end the following:

1       “(b) FIREWALL BETWEEN PROMOTERS AND MAN-  
2 AGERS.—

3               “(1) IN GENERAL.—It is unlawful for—

4                       “(A) a promoter to have a direct or indi-  
5 rect financial interest in the management of a  
6 boxer; or

7                       “(B) a manager—

8                               “(i) to have a direct or indirect finan-  
9 cial interest in the promotion of a boxer; or

10                               “(ii) to be employed by or receive  
11 compensation or other benefits from a pro-  
12 moter, except for amounts received as con-  
13 sideration under the manager’s contract  
14 with the boxer.

15               “(2) EXCEPTIONS.—Paragraph (1)—

16                       “(A) does not prohibit a boxer from acting  
17 as his own promoter or manager; and

18                       “(B) only applies to boxers participating in  
19 a boxing match of 10 rounds or more.

20       “(c) SANCTIONING ORGANIZATIONS.—

21               “(1) PROHIBITION ON RECEIPTS.—Except as  
22 provided in paragraph (2), no officer or employee of  
23 a sanctioning organization may receive any com-  
24 pensation, gift, or benefit, directly or indirectly, from  
25 a promoter, boxer, or manager.

1           “(2) EXCEPTIONS.—Paragraph (1) does not  
2       apply to—

3           “(A) the receipt of payment by a promoter,  
4       boxer, or manager of a sanctioning organiza-  
5       tion’s published fee for sanctioning a profes-  
6       sional boxing match or reasonable expenses in  
7       connection therewith if the payment is reported  
8       to the responsible boxing commission; or

9           “(B) the receipt of a gift or benefit of de  
10       minimis value.”.

11 **SEC. 6. ENFORCEMENT.**

12       Subsection (b) of section 18 of the Professional Box-  
13       ing Safety Act of 1996 (15 U.S.C. 6309) (as redesignated  
14       by section 4 of this Act) is amended—

15           (1) in paragraph (1) by inserting a comma and  
16       “other than section 9(b), 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, or 16,”  
17       after “this Act”;

18           (2) by redesignating paragraphs (2) and (3) as  
19       paragraphs (3) and (4), respectively;

20           (3) by inserting after paragraph (1) the fol-  
21       lowing:

22           “(2) VIOLATION OF ANTIEXPLOITATION, SANC-  
23       TIONING ORGANIZATION, OR DISCLOSURE PROVI-  
24       SIONS.—Any person who knowingly violates any pro-  
25       vision of section 9(b), 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, or 16 of



1       this Act shall, upon conviction, be imprisoned for not  
2       more than 1 year or fined not more than—

3               “(A) \$100,000; and

4               “(B) if a violation occurs in connection  
5       with a professional boxing match the gross rev-  
6       enues for which exceed \$2,000,000, an addi-  
7       tional amount which bears the same ratio to  
8       \$100,000 as the amount of such revenues com-  
9       pared to \$2,000,000, or both.”; and

10       (4) in paragraph (3) (as redesignated by para-  
11       graph 2 of this subsection) by striking “section 9”  
12       and inserting “section 17(a)”; and

13       (5) by adding at the end the following:

14       “(c) ACTIONS BY STATES.—Whenever the chief law  
15       enforcement officer of any State has reason to believe that  
16       a person or organization is engaging in practices which  
17       violate any requirement of this Act, the State, as *parens*  
18       *patriae*, may bring a civil action on behalf of its residents  
19       in an appropriate district court of the United States—

20               “(1) to enjoin the holding of any professional  
21       boxing match which the practice involves;

22               “(2) to enforce compliance with this Act;

23               “(3) to obtain the fines provided under sub-  
24       section (b) or appropriate restitution; or

1           “(4) to obtain such other relief as the court  
2           may deem appropriate.

3           “(d) PRIVATE RIGHT OF ACTION.—Any boxer who  
4 suffers economic injury as a result of a violation of any  
5 provision of this Act may bring an action in the appro-  
6 priate Federal or State court and recover the damages suf-  
7 fered, court costs, and reasonable attorneys fees and ex-  
8 penses.

9           “(e) ENFORCEMENT AGAINST FEDERAL TRADE  
10 COMMISSION, STATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL, ETC.—Noth-  
11 ing in this Act authorizes the enforcement of—

12           “(1) any provision of this Act against the Fed-  
13 eral Trade Commission, the United States Attorney  
14 General, or the chief legal officer of any State for  
15 acting or failing to act in an official capacity;

16           “(2) subsection (d) of this section against a  
17 State or political subdivision of a State, or any agen-  
18 cy or instrumentality thereof; or

19           “(3) section 10 against a boxer acting in his ca-  
20 pacity as a boxer.”.

21 **SEC. 7. ADDITIONAL AMENDMENTS.**

22           (a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 2(a) of the Professional  
23 Boxing Safety Act of 1996 (15 U.S.C. 6301(a)) is  
24 amended—

1           (1) in paragraph (10) by striking the period at  
2           the end and inserting “, including the Virgin Is-  
3           lands.”; and

4           (2) by adding at the end the following:

5           “(11) EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE CONTRACT.—  
6           The term ‘effective date of the contract’ means the  
7           day upon which a boxer becomes legally bound by  
8           the contract.

9           “(12) BOXING SERVICE PROVIDER.—The term  
10          ‘boxing service provider’ means a promoter, man-  
11          ager, sanctioning body, licensee, or matchmaker.

12          “(13) CONTRACT PROVISION.—The term ‘con-  
13          tract provision’ means any legal obligation between  
14          a boxer and a boxing service provider.

15          “(14) SANCTIONING ORGANIZATION.—The term  
16          ‘sanctioning organization’ means an organization  
17          that sanctions professional boxing matches in the  
18          United States—

19                 “(A) between boxers who are residents of  
20                 different States; or

21                 “(B) that are advertised, otherwise pro-  
22                 moted, or broadcast (including closed circuit  
23                 television) in interstate commerce.

1           “(15) SUSPENSION.—The term ‘suspension’ in-  
2           cludes within its meaning the revocation of a boxing  
3           license.”.

4           (b) STATE BOXING COMMISSION PROCEDURES.—  
5           Section 7(a)(2) of the Professional Boxing Safety Act of  
6           1996 (15 U.S.C. 6306(a)(2)) is amended—

7                   (1) in subparagraph (C) by striking “or”;

8                   (2) in subparagraph (D) by striking “docu-  
9           ments.” at the end and inserting “documents; or”;  
10          and

11                  (3) by adding at the end the following:

12                           “(E) unsportsmanlike conduct or other in-  
13           appropriate behavior inconsistent with generally  
14           accepted methods of competition in a profes-  
15           sional boxing match.”.

16          (c) RENEWAL PERIOD FOR IDENTIFICATION  
17          CARDS.—Section 6(b)(2) of the Professional Boxing Safe-  
18          ty Act of 1996 (15 U.S.C. 6305(b)(2)) is amended by  
19          striking “2 years.” and inserting “4 years.”.

20          (d) REVIEW OF SUSPENSIONS.—Section 7(a)(3) of  
21          the Professional Boxing Safety Act of 1996 (15 U.S.C.  
22          6306(a)(3)) is amended by striking “boxer” and inserting  
23          “boxer, licensee, manager, matchmaker, promoter, or  
24          other boxing service provider”.

1 (e) ALTERNATIVE SUPERVISION.—Section 4 of the  
2 Professional Boxing Safety Act of 1996 (15 U.S.C. 6303)  
3 is amended—

4 (1) by striking “No person” and inserting “(a)  
5 No person”; and

6 (2) by inserting at the end thereof the fol-  
7 lowing:

8 “(b) For the purpose of this Act, if no State commis-  
9 sion is available to supervise a boxing match according to  
10 subsection (a), then—

11 “(1) the match may not be held unless it is su-  
12 pervised by an association of boxing commissions to  
13 which at least a majority of the States belong; and

14 “(2) any reporting or other requirement relat-  
15 ing to a supervising commission allowed under this  
16 section shall be deemed to refer to the entity de-  
17 scribed in paragraph (1).”.

18 (f) HEALTH AND SAFETY DISCLOSURES.—Section 6  
19 of the Professional Boxing Safety Act of 1996 (15 U.S.C.  
20 6305) is amended by adding at the end the following new  
21 subsection:

22 “(c) HEALTH AND SAFETY DISCLOSURES.—It is the  
23 sense of the Congress that a boxing commission should,  
24 upon issuing an identification card to a boxer under sub-  
25 section (b)(1), make a health and safety disclosure to that

1 boxer as that commission considers appropriate. The  
2 health and safety disclosure should include the health and  
3 safety risks associated with boxing, and, in particular, the  
4 risk and frequency of brain injury and the advisability that  
5 a boxer periodically undergo medical procedures designed  
6 to detect brain injury.”.

Passed the House of Representatives November 8,  
1999.

Attest:

*Clerk.*